



Congressman Pence and Congressman Walden have been tireless in protecting First Amendment rights.

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[AUDIO OF PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCING BROADCASTER FREEDOM ACT FOR 111TH CONGRESS](#)

Washington, Jan 8 - Congressman Mike Pence, Chairman of the House Republican Conference and Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR) have introduced the Broadcaster Freedom Act of 2009 (H.R. 226). The bill would prevent the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from reinstating the Fairness Doctrine, which would suppress free speech by requiring the government to monitor political views and decide what constitutes fair political discourse.

Congressman Pence's full remarks from the press conference announcing the bill follow:

"The American people cherish freedom, that's why President Reagan repealed the so called Fairness Doctrine back in 1987. It actually for four decades in America regulated the content of broadcast radio in this country.

"Now bringing back the Fairness Doctrine today as some of the most powerful Democrats in the House and Senate have advocated that we do, bringing back the Fairness Doctrine today would amount to government control over political views expressed on the public airways.

"I believe it is dangerous to suggest that government should be in the business of rationing free speech for that is precisely the function of the Fairness Doctrine and it was the function of the Fairness Doctrine during its 40 year reign.

During my years as a professional in radio and television I developed a great respect for a free and independent press and since being in Congress I've been the recipient of praise and on occasion harsh criticism by many in the electronic media and even some in talk radio.

"But it hasn't changed my fundamental belief in the importance of a free and independent press and that precisely that oath that Senator DeMint said we took yesterday demands of each of us in this institution its vigorous defense.

Now I mentioned that some of the most powerful elected officials in the Democratic Party have actually openly advocated bringing back the so called Fairness Doctrine. Among

them, Senator Dick Durbin, Senator Diane Feinstein, Senator John Kerry and last summer Speaker Nancy Pelosi told the Christian Science Monitor that passing the bill that we are reintroducing today, the Broadcaster Freedom Act was – she said it would not receive a vote on the floor because, “The interest of my caucus is the reverse.”

“I said on the floor the following day and I say with respect today, defending freedom is the paramount interest of every member of the American Congress. So the Republicans you see here gathered today, our cosponsors in the House and the Senate, are taking action. We’re reintroducing in this Congress the Broadcaster Freedom Act. It would take the power away from this administration and the incoming administration and any future President to restore the Fairness Doctrine without an act of Congress.

“But let me emphasize another point Senator DeMint made and that is that opposition to the Fairness Doctrine is truly bipartisan. I can speak with authority about the House of Representatives.

“In 2007 I introduced an amendment that would ban re-implementation of the Fairness Doctrine for simply one year and we are prepared to do so again.

“At that time over 300 Republicans and Democrats voted to ban the reimposition of the Fairness Doctrine for that fiscal year. I truly believe if the Broadcaster Freedom Act is brought to the floor before the House of Representatives that it would pass. It would pass because of that previous vote, the evidence that we’ve seen, but I also believe it would pass because whenever freedom gets an up or down vote on the floor of the people’s House, freedom always wins.

“But John F. Kennedy said, “We are not afraid to entrust the American people with unpleasant facts, foreign ideas, alien philosophies and competitive values, for a nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth or falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people.”

“America is a nation of freedom and strong opinion, our government must not be afraid to entrust the American people with all the facts and opinions necessary to make choices as an informed electorate.

“That’s precisely what this experiment in democracy is all about. It’s time to send the Fairness Doctrine to the ash heap of broadcast history where it belongs. Broadcaster Freedom Act that we introduced today with our colleagues in the Senate and the House will do just that.

“And I also want to renew the call for our Democratic colleagues to join us, to take a bipartisan stand for freedom, to oppose the Democrat leaderships plan to censor the airwaves of American talk radio and American Christian radio, bring the Broadcaster Freedom Act to the floor with all deliberate speed and do our part in this Congress to preserve a free and independent press on the airways of America.”

